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ABSTRACT

A recommendation is made by the presidents and chancellor of the four historically Black colleges and universities in Maryland that the goal of racial equality requiring the education of larger numbers of Blacks at all levels of higher education in a wide variety of fields--undergraduate, graduate, and professional--be kept at the forefront of the plans of the state. Statistics are cited to support the contention that proportionately more whites than Blacks have attended or completed college. A five-point approach to higher education in Maryland is urged: (1) A statewide plan for educational equality should be developed. (2) Predominately Black institutions should be viewed and treated in their proper role as positive features of the statewide system and as contributors to the racial equality goals of the state and the federal government. (3) Affirmative action programs should be strengthened in the predominately white institutions so they may make a greater contribution to equality at all levels. (4) The statewide plan should not only move vigorously to enhance the Black institutions and desegregate the predominately white institutions, but it should also encourage cooperative relationships among these historically Black and white institutions. (5) The predominately Black institutions are leaders in this endeavor and should be encouraged to help their white counterparts. (IBH)

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TOWARD EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND ATTAINMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN MARYLAND

A Position Paper

Submitted to: The Maryland Board for Higher Education
Dr. Sheldon Knorr, Commissioner

By

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Position Statement on Black Higher Education in Maryland

by

Presidents and Chancellor of the Four Historically
Black Colleges and Universities in Maryland

The State of Maryland has an uneven history in the education of Black Americans at the higher education levels. Historically the situation has been characterized by racial inequality, segregation and injustice. In recent years, since the 1954 Supreme Court Decision in the Brown Case, the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1974 decision of the Appeals Court in the Adams Case, considerable progress has been made in Maryland as in other states in educating larger numbers of Black Americans. Even now, however, the goal of equality is far from achieved. And the gap between Blacks and whites is widening. We earnestly and unanimously recommend, therefore, that the goal of racial equality which requires the education of larger numbers of Black Americans at all levels of higher education and in a wide variety of fields, undergraduate, graduate and professional, be kept at the forefront of the plans of the State as reflected in the deliberations of the Maryland Board for Higher Education and its various organs.

Educational inequality is suggested by the following figures. In the nation as a whole among adults 25 to 34 years of age, 21 per cent of whites have completed college while only 8 per cent of Blacks have completed college. Among the younger age group, 20 to 24 years, while 43 per cent of whites have completed at least one year of college, only 27 per cent of Blacks have reached that same minimum level of higher education. Altogether, about 14 per cent of whites between 16 and 34 were attending some form of higher education in 1974 compared to 9 per cent of Blacks. When we consider the graduate and professional schools, the status of inequality is even more glaring. In Maryland the situation is comparable.

We are, therefore, in total and complete agreement with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, which held as follows in the Adams Case:

> The problem of integrating higher education must be dealt with on a state-wide rather than a school-by-school basis. Perhaps the most serious problem in this area is the lack of statewide planning to provide more and better trained minority group doctors, lawyers, engineers and other professionals.

The Court continued:

> "A predicate for minority access to quality post-graduate programs is a viable, co-ordinated state-wide higher education policy that takes into account the special problems of minority students and of Black colleges. As amicus points out, these Black institutions currently fulfill a crucial need and will continue to play an important role in Black higher education.

To our own knowledge, similar views as the above have been expressed by the executive branch of the federal government, including the President, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, the Commissioner of Education, and the Assistant Secretary for Education. Moreover, similar views have been expressed by the governmental leaders in the State of Maryland on numerous occasions.

We, therefore, join with the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education and urge the State Board for Higher Education to adopt this policy as its guiding principle in its efforts to bring about equality of educational opportunity in all levels of higher education in Maryland.

In keeping with the above considerations, we urge on the State Board for Higher Education, the governmental leaders and the citizens generally the following five-point approach to higher education in this state.

1. First, we urge that a statewide plan for educational equality be developed.

Rather than focusing exclusively on a single institution, we urge the State Board to focus on the entire statewide system of higher education. We

are among those who think that the Maryland Plan for completing the Desegregation of the Public Post-Secondary Institutions was a fine and commendable beginning. We still subscribe to the basic intent and requirements of this plan. We urge, however, that some modifications be made in it to accord with the sentiments of the Appeals Court to insure that larger numbers of Blacks are actually graduated from all levels of the higher education system.

2. Secondly, we urge that the predominantly Black institutions be viewed and treated in their proper role as positive features of the state-wide system and as contributors to the racial equality goals of the State and the federal government. These institutions are an important part of the solution to educational inequality which still exists in this State. They are not and should not be treated as part of the problem.

We are gratified that by 1975 fully 20 per cent of the students enrolled in all forms of public education beyond high school in this State were Black. That impressive progress overlooks the fact that a disproportion of these Black students were enrolled in community college and trade schools rather than four year colleges and universities. Even so, however, this represents distinct progress, a progress which could only be achieved with both the predominantly Black and the predominantly white institutions making substantial contributions. Indeed, we are also mindful that fully half of Black students enrolled in four year institutions are enrolled in the predominantly Black institutions. Moreover, fully 62 per cent of all Blacks who graduated from colleges and universities in this State graduated from the four predominantly Black college institutions. We are convinced that the only way to bring about equality and integration in higher education and in the professions

is to strengthen and enhance these institutions as viable partners in a total system of higher education.

What does it mean to strengthen, enhance and further develop these institutions? We think that the Cox's Commission Report was a very fine statement in this regard. Moreover, three aspects of enhancement are essential. First, that new degree granting programs be established at these institutions and that the line be held on establishing new programs at competing institutions which are more fully developed. Secondly, enhancement requires that budgetary support for the predominantly Black institutions and all others as well give explicit recognition to numbers and proportions of students who come from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Third, enhancement of these institutions means lifting the quota of out-of-state students so long as they do not displace in-state students at these institutions. These are, in our judgement, the minimum requirements for the enhancement of these institutions.

In the case of the UMES, therefore, we urge you to recognize that this institution has already been merged with the University of Maryland. We urge that it remain part of the University and be developed as a visible unit of this University System, locating new programs there: The School of Veterinary Medicine, The School of Hotel and Restaurant Management, a program in Agribusiness, and other graduate level professional programs needed on the Eastern Shore. The Eastern Shore needs expanded educational opportunities at the graduate and professional levels. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is a logical place to establish these programs.

3. A third general recommendation we make is that affirmative action programs be strengthened in the predominantly white institutions so as to enable these institutions to make a greater contribution to equality of educational opportunity and attainment at all levels.

In this regard, we have joined with the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education in entering a brief on the side of the University of California in the Baake Case. We urge the State Board to request of the Attorney General of Maryland that a brief be entered on the same side, that is, in favor of affirmative action and special programs to admit and graduate larger numbers of minorities from graduate and professional schools in predominantly white institutions.

4. Fourth, The statewide plan should not only move vigorously to enhance the Black institutions and desegregate the predominantly white institutions at all levels, but it should also encourage cooperative relationships among these historically Black and the historically white institutions. Such cooperation must be done so as to keep a focus on the goal of equality, of producing larger numbers of black graduates and respecting the historical and cultural integrity and special mission of both types of institutions.

5. Finally, we urge the Board to recognize that insofar as racial integration in higher education is concerned, these predominantly Black institutions are leaders in this endeavor. And find ways to have these institutions help their white counterparts move more rapidly toward integration in their faculties, staffs, and cultural programs without destroying the integrity of the Black institutions in the process.

In sum, we know that there are some citizens of this State and elsewhere who hold that Blacks have reached a status of equality with whites in higher education and in the professions so there is no longer any need for special efforts on behalf of the education of Blacks. We disagree. A fair reading of the facts will show that there is still inequality. And as long as that is the true status of Blacks in higher education there is still a need for special efforts on behalf of the education of Blacks. These special efforts take a variety of forms. We think that special purpose institutions, special efforts within general purpose institutions and cooperation among both types of institutions are all required to move steadily toward equality. Any slackening of special efforts in either of these ways would set back the struggle for equality immeasurably. There is no requirement in our view that all educational programs and institutions be predominantly white in order to be effective or legal. There is a need that all of them be open to students of both races who wish to matriculate. Predominantly Black institutions have already demonstrated a commitment and a know-how in this regard. The heritage and the history and the contributions of these institutions far beyond the Black community must be protected and enhanced as part of any fair and effective statewide policy toward equality of opportunity and attainment in higher education.